

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 ICA-11 SIL-01 LAB-04 EB-08
COME-00 /075 W
-----072690 101912Z /53

R 101817Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9860
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
USNMR SHAPE
USMISSION USNATO
USCINCEUR
DIA WASHDC
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 11705

USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, FR
SUBJECT: THE POST-ELECTION CFDT: BRICKBATS AND
OLIVE BRANCHES

REF: PARIS 10342

1. SUMMARY: AS THE CFDT MODERATES ATTEMPT TO MAIN-
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TAIN THEIR CONFEDERATION ON ITS NEW COURSE, THEY
HAVE BEEN SHARPLY ATTACKED BY THE CGT, AND OFFERED
AN OLIVE BRANCH BY FO. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN,
HOWEVER, IF THE CFDT CAN MAINTAIN ITS PRESENT
POSTURE AT AN UPCOMING NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING,
MUCH LESS MOVE TOWARDS FO, WHICH MAY HELP EXPLAIN
WHY THE ELYSEE HAS TOLD US AND THE AFL-CIO THAT IT

IS DISCREETLY GOING TO DO ALL IT CAN TO HELP FO,
AND HOPEFULLY THEREBY RATIONALIZE THE FRENCH LABOR
RELATIONS SCENE. END SUMMARY.

2. IN THE WAKE OF THE CFDT DECISION TO ALTER
COURSE, AND ADOPT A LESS POLITICAL AND MORE TRADE
UNION POSTURE (SEE REFTEL), A SHARP WAR OF WORDS
BROKE OUT BETWEEN THAT CONFEDERATION AND ITS FORMER
CLOSE ALLY, THE CGT. APPARENTLY GENUINELY CONCERNED
OVER THE CFDT'S TERMINATION OF THE MORE OR LESS AUTO-
MATIC UNITY OF ACTION WHICH HAS MARKED THEIR RELATION
UP UNTIL THE ELECTIONS; AND ANNOYED BY THE CFDT'S
PUBLIC SCOLDING OF THE PCF FOR THE LEFT'S DEFEAT,
AND OF IT FOR BEING THAT PARTY'S MOUTHPIECE, THE CGT
HAS BEEN TRYING TO PRESSURE THE CFDT'S LEADERSHIP TO
BACK DOWN. IN A SERIES OF STATEMENTS AND LETTERS,
THE CGT HAS ACCUSED THE CFDT LEADERSHIP OF ABANDON-
ING UNITY OF ACTION IN FAVOR OF "REFORMISM", AND OF
MAKING UNACCEPTABLE AND OFFENSIVE CRITICISMS OF IT
AND ITS ACTIONS. AS A CONSEQUENCE, THERE HAS BEEN A
LIVELY EXCHANGE OF PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE -- BUT NO
PERSONAL MEETINGS -- BETWEEN CGT GENERAL SECRETARY
SEGUY AND CFDT LEADER MAIRE. FINALLY, ON APRIL 7,
THE CFDT ANNOUNCED THAT IT INTENDED TO MAKE NO MORE
WRITTEN COMMENTS ON THE SITUATION UNTIL AFTER ITS
NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETS IN LATE APRIL, TO "CONSIDER
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AND RATIFY" THE EXECUTIVE'S CHANGE IN COURSE. IN
MAKING THAT ANNOUNCEMENT, HOWEVER, MAIRE ORALLY
REPEATED HIS CRITICISMS OF THE CGT, AND IN PARTICULAR
OF ITS INSISTANCE ON WANTING TO CONTINUE IN THE
SAME MANNER AS BEFORE THE ELECTIONS, AS IF NOTHING
HAD HAPPENED. UNITY OF ACTION, HE SAID, WAS STILL
POSSIBLE, BUT ONLY WHEN THERE WERE COMMON GOALS TO BE
ACHIEVED. (THE SITUATION HAS NOW REACHED THE POINT,
WHERE EVEN THE DECISION AS TO WHETHER TO PARTICIPATE
WITH THE CGT IN JOINT MAY DAY PARADES IS BEING LEFT
TO THE CFDT'S REGIONAL OFFICES.)

3. AT THE SAME TIME AS THE CGT WAS ATTACKING THE
CFDT LEADERSHIP, FO HAS BEEN HOLDING OUT AN OLIVE
BRANCH. SPEAKING AT AN APRIL 4 PRESS LUNCHEON,
FO GENERAL SECRETARY BERGERON NOTED THAT HE WAS
FOLLOWING WITH INTEREST THE DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE
CFDT; AND COMMENTED THAT ALTHOUGH HE WAS OPPOSED TO
AUTOGESTION, THAT SHOULD POSE NO OBSTACLE TO A
RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO FEDERATIONS, AND THAT
IF THINGS SEEMED TO BE MOVING IN THAT DIRECTION
FO WOULD CONVENE AN EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF ITS

NATIONAL CONFEDERAL COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER THE MATTER.
IN APPARENT REPLY, THE CFDT ANNOUNCED AT ITS APRIL 7
PRESS CONFERENCE THAT ONE OF THE ITEMS
THAT WILL BE TAKEN UP AT THE NATIONAL COUNCIL
MEETING WILL BE RELATIONS WITH FO, AND THE POSSI-
BILITIES OF COOPERATION.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 11705

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4. COMMENT: IN CONSIDERING ALL THESE DEVELOPMENTS,
IT WOULD BE WELL TO MAINTAIN AN ATTITUDE OF HOPEFUL
SCEPTICISM. THERE ARE SERIOUS INTERNAL POLITICAL
AND EMOTIONAL OBSTACLES (ON BOTH SIDES) TO ANY

RECONCILIATION BETWEEN FO AND THE CFDT; AS WELL AS
OUTSIDE FORCES WHICH HAVE A VESTED INTEREST IN
MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO. (AND, ASTONISHINGLY,
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THE FRENCH PRESS HAS IGNORED BOTH BERGERON'S SIGNAL
AND THE APPARENT CFDT RESPONSE.)

5. MOREOVER, IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN IF THE CFDT
LEADERSHIP CAN EVEN MAINTAIN THE PRESENT CHANGE IN
COURSE, MUCH LESS MOVE CLOSER TO FO. NOT ONLY IS
THE UNION INFILTRATED BY COMMUNISTS, BUT IT ALSO HAS
A LARGE NUMBER OF QUITE GENUINE RADICALS, WHO WILL
OPPOSE ANY MOVE IN THE DIRECTION OF "REFORMISM".
(IT MUST BE KEPT IN MIND THAT MAIRE'S UNION IS A
GENUINELY DEMOCRATIC BODY, AND THAT A CHANGE IN
SIGNALS SUCH AS HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE WOULD STRAIN
THE FABRIC OF EVEN AN AUTHORITARIAN ORGANIZATION,
MUCH LESS A RELATIVELY UNDISCIPLINED ORGANIZATION
LIKE THE CFDT.) THE LATE APRIL MEETING OF THE
NATIONAL COUNCIL WILL BE THE NEXT TEST OF STRENGTH
BETWEEN THE VARIOUS FORCES WITHIN THE CFDT, AND
THE RESULTS WILL BE MADE KNOWN AT A MAY 2 PRESS
CONFERENCE.

6. IT IS PROBABLY FOR THESE REASONS (AS WELL AS
THE CFDT'S UNCHANGED COMMITMENT TO THE POLITICAL
LEFT AND FOR SOMEHOW FINDING A WAY OF WORKING WITH
THE COMMUNISTS TO CHANGE THE SYSTEM) THAT A DECISION
HAS BEEN MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT TO THROW ITS WEIGHT
BEHIND FO. IN A JOINT LUNCH WITH THE LABOR ATTACHE
AND THE EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AFL-CIO, A
RESPONSIBLE ELYSEE OFFICIAL STATED THAT THE GOVERN-
MENT HAS DECIDED THAT A LARGE AND STRONG FO IS THE
KEY TO DEVELOPING A HEALTHY LABOR RELATIONS SYSTEM
IN FRANCE; AND THAT IT IS GOING TO DO ALL IT CAN,
DISCREETLY, TO HELP THAT UNION. IN THAT CONNECTION,
WE AND THE AFL-CIO WERE TOLD THAT THE ATTITUDE OF
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THE ENTIRE BUSINESS COMMUNITY WAS CRUCIAL, AND THAT
THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO PUT PRESSURE ON BUSINESS
TO COOPERATE IN HELPING MAKE FO THE PACE-SETTING
FORCE IN FRENCH LABOR RELATIONS.
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